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Attorney General Jon Bruning

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 30, 2007 12:30 CDT

Contact: Holley Hatt
402.471.2067

Domestic Violence Bill Passes, \$4.6 Million in Grant Funding Preserved for Nebraska

(Lincoln, NE) Attorney General Jon Bruning today applauded the Legislature's passage of LB 143 which prevents the use of polygraph testing of sexual assault victims as the sole condition for proceeding with a criminal investigation.

Passage of the bill maintains Nebraska's eligibility for more than \$4.6 million in U.S. Department of Justice grant funding for domestic violence programs in Nebraska. State Senator Vickie McDonald introduced the bill as part of the Attorney General's legislative package.

"LB 143 is a big win for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence," Bruning said. "Sen. McDonald recognized the importance of the funds to our communities. I appreciate her leadership on the issue."

The legislation had to be adopted by Jan. 5, 2009, to maintain eligibility in the program. Nebraska receives more than \$4.6 million in U.S. Department Violence Against Women Act funding for fiscal years 2006 and 2007. The Nebraska Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Coalition, the Nebraska State Patrol, and the Nebraska Department of Justice share \$487,372 of that total.

"I'm pleased that my colleagues recognized the importance of passing LB 143," McDonald said. "It ensures that Nebraska agencies and organizations will continue to be eligible for approximately \$4.6 million in federal grant funds from the U.S. Department of Justice and the Violence Against Women Act. This grant funding is vital to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence and to the agencies and organizations that work directly with these victims on a daily basis."

The Nebraska Domestic Violence/Sexual Assault Coalition, the Nebraska State Patrol, and the Nebraska Department of Justice use the grant funding to host a series of seminars across the state. In 2006, more than 500 law enforcement officers, victim advocates, medical emergency personnel, and prosecutors participated in the conferences.

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 30, 2007, 4:30 p.m. CT

CONTACT
Jen Rae Hein, 402-471-1967
Ashley Craddock, 402-471-1970
Holley Hatt, AG's Office, 402-471-2067

Gov. Heineman & Attorney General Bruning Comment on LB 377

(Lincoln, Neb.) Gov. Dave Heineman and Attorney General Jon Bruning released the following statements regarding the Judiciary Committee's discussion today on LB 377 / decision to send LB 377 to the floor of the Legislature for consideration.

Gov. Heineman said, "I am adamantly opposed to the repeal of the death penalty. In its current form LB 377 is a back door attempt to repeal the death penalty in Nebraska. My support for the death penalty has been very clear and I am opposed to its repeal, in whatever form it may take. If this bill reaches my desk, I will veto it."

Attorney General Bruning said, "Let me be clear – I support the death penalty. I believe it is an effective deterrent and an appropriate punishment for the worst of the worst. I'm confident the people on death row deserve to be there. This proposal is no compromise. It will end the death penalty in Nebraska."

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Editor's Note: Audio clips of these statements are available online at
<http://www.gov.state.ne.us> and <http://www.ago.state.ne.us>.



Guest Column: March 27, 2007

Contact: Holley Hatt, 402-471-2067

**Violence Against Women Funding a Big Win for
Nebraska Domestic Violence and Abuse Victims**

March has been a momentous month in the fight against domestic violence, sexual assault and abuse both at the state and federal levels.

Last week, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed an extra \$100 million in program funding for U.S. Justice Department's Violence Against Women Act (VAWA). The funding is not final, but if it is passed, individual states will benefit.

Nebraska currently receives nearly \$500,000 in grant funds from VAWA. The grant is divided between the Nebraska State Patrol, the Nebraska Domestic Violence Sexual Assault Coalition, and the Attorney General's office. It allows us to better prepare first responders, law enforcement officers, and prosecutors for domestic violence incidents.

Throughout 2006, the grant funded four conferences and 14 presentations. Over 500 public servants participated in the trainings.

The Nebraska Legislature sees the importance of VAWA funding. It will soon be considering LB 143 for final passage. This bill, sponsored by State Senator Vickie McDonald, updates Nebraska law to assure that polygraph tests of sexual assault victims will not be used as a condition for proceeding with a criminal investigation. This provision was necessary to maintain Nebraska's eligibility for VAWA grant funding.

Fighting domestic violence, sexual assault and abuse requires vigilance and preparation. VAWA funding helps ensure we have the resources needed to help those victims.



Attorney General Jon Bruning

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 23, 2007 5:00pm CDT

Contact: Holley Hatt
402.471.2067

Bruning Meets With Former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres

(Lincoln, NE) Attorney General Jon Bruning today met with former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres in Tel Aviv, as part of his continuing trip in the Middle East with the Aspen Institute-Rodel Fellowships in Public Leadership program.

"Meeting with leaders like Prime Minister Peres has been an invaluable experience," Bruning said. "Our conversation provided a lasting impression of the historic developments in the region."

Prime Minister Peres has been active in Israeli government for nearly 50 years, including serving as Minister of Defense in 1974 to 1977 and as prime minister from 1984 to 1986. In 1994, Prime Minister Peres was awarded a Nobel Peace Prize.

As an Aspen-Rodel fellow, Bruning is currently visiting Egypt, Israel and Jordan. The purpose of the trip is to interact with foreign leaders and understand how developments in the Middle East impact American policy.

The Aspen-Rodel Fellowship program was founded in 2005 to provide the nation's top young political leaders with a better understanding of America's underlying democratic principles and to help foster civility in the public arena. The two-year bipartisan program is sponsored by the Aspen Institute, an international nonprofit leadership organization, and the Rodel Foundation, a group of public and private organizations committed to improving education.

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A photo of Prime Minister Peres and Attorney General Jon Bruning is attached.



Attorney General Jon Bruning

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 23, 2007 3:00pm CDT

Contact: Holley Hatt
402.471.2067

Bruning Secures Conviction in Pawnee County Homicide

(Lincoln, NE) Attorney General Jon Bruning today announced Patrick Schroeder, 29, of Dubois was convicted of [first degree murder, use of a deadly weapon to commit a felony and forgery] in Pawnee County District Court.

“Mr. Schroeder is a cold-blooded killer who belongs in prison,” Bruning said. “This conviction finally puts an end to a troubling year for the residents of Pawnee City.”

On April 14, 2006, Schroeder murdered his former employer, Kenneth Albers of Pawnee City, while attempting to rob him at his home. Albers died of blunt force trauma to the head. Albers’ body was later found in an abandoned well southwest of Pawnee City.

The forgery charges stem from an April 10 incident when Schroeder stole a checkbook from Albers, forged Albers’ signature on a check, and cashed it. Albers’ account was immediately overdrawn.

Schroeder’s sentencing hearing will be held at TIME on DATE, in Pawnee County District Court. First degree murder is a class I felony, punishable by life in prison without the possibility of parole. The other counts, use of a deadly weapon to commit a felony and forgery, are class III felonies and carry sentences of one to 20 years in prison and a \$25,000 fine.

Assistant Attorneys General Mike Guinan and Doug Warner are handling the case.

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Attorney General Jon Bruning

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 22, 2007 2:30pm CDT

Contact: Holley Hatt
402.471.2067

Former Chadron Police Dispatcher Pleads Guilty in Child Death

(Lincoln, NE) Attorney General Jon Bruning today announced that former Chadron Police dispatcher Kent Fleischmann, 25, of Chadron pleaded guilty to one count of child abuse resulting in death. The plea occurred in Dawes County District Court.

“Nothing can replace the loss of a child,” Bruning said. “Hopefully, we can bring some comfort to the family by making sure Mr. Fleischmann pays for his crime.”

On Sept. 12, 2006, Fleischmann was caring for his girlfriend’s nine-month-old baby. At midnight, he placed a call to the Chadron Police Department to say he was taking the baby to the hospital. The infant died the following day of a fracture to the left side of the skull and cranial bleeding.

Fleischmann’s sentencing hearing will be held at 9 a.m., May 15, in Dawes County District Court in Chadron. Child abuse resulting in death is a class IB felony, punishable by a mandatory minimum of 20 years and a possible maximum of life in prison.

The Attorney General’s criminal bureau chief, John Freudenberg, and Dawes County Attorney Vance Haug are handling the case.

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Attorney General Jon Bruning

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 22, 2007 5:00pm CDT

Contact: Holley Hatt
402.471.2067

Bruning Meets With Jordan Prime Minister Marouf Bakhit

(Lincoln, NE) Attorney General Jon Bruning met Wednesday with Jordan Prime Minister Marouf Bakhit in Amman, as part of the Aspen Institute-Rodel Fellowships in Public Leadership program.

“Sitting down with Minister Bakhit and discussing Middle East affairs is an eye-opening experience,” Bruning said. “I appreciate the opportunity to better understand the cultural, economic, and historic factors that impact decision making in that region.”

As an Aspen-Rodel fellow, Bruning is currently visiting Egypt, Israel and Jordan. The purpose of the trip is to interact with foreign leaders and understand how developments in the Middle East impact American policy.

The Aspen-Rodel Fellowship program was founded in 2005 to provide the nation’s top young political leaders with a better understanding of America’s underlying democratic principles and to help foster civility in the public arena. The two-year bipartisan program is sponsored by the Aspen Institute, an international nonprofit leadership organization, and the Rodel Foundation, a group of public and private organizations committed to improving education.

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A photo of Prime Minister Bakhit and Attorney General Jon Bruning is attached.



Attorney General Jon Bruning

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 19, 2007 6:15pm CDT

Contact: Holley Hatt
402.471.2067

Bruning Meets With Former U.N. Secretary-General in Cairo, Egypt

(Lincoln, NE) Attorney General Jon Bruning today met with former Secretary-General for the United Nations Boutros Boutros-Ghali in Cairo, Egypt, as part of the Aspen Institute-Rodel Fellowships in Public Leadership program. Boutros-Ghali currently serves as speaker of the National Council for Human Rights.

"I'm honored to meet with such esteemed leaders in international affairs as Mr. Boutros-Ghali," Bruning said. "He provides unique insight into the region's complex relationships and their impact on Nebraska."

In addition to Boutros-Ghali's position as U.N. Secretary-General from 1992 to 1997, he was a member of the Egyptian Parliament and an active participant in the 1979 Camp David accords between Egypt and Israel.

As an Aspen-Rodel fellow, Bruning is currently visiting Egypt, Israel and Jordan. The purpose of the trip is to interact with foreign leaders and understand how developments in the Middle East impact American policy.

The Aspen-Rodel Fellowship program was founded in 2005 to provide the nation's top young political leaders with a better understanding of America's underlying democratic principles and to help foster civility in the public arena. The two-year bipartisan program is sponsored by the Aspen Institute, an international nonprofit leadership organization, and the Rodel Foundation, a group of public and private organizations committed to improving education.

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In the photo attached: Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali proudly wears a lapel pin presented by Attorney General Bruning.



Attorney General Jon Bruning

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 19, 2007 3:30pm CDT

Contacts: Holley Hatt, 402.471.2067
Attorney General's Office
Jessica Watson, 402.471.2630
Sen. Annette Dubas's Office

Bruning, Dubas Urge Landowners to Use Caution in Wind Energy Agreements

(Lincoln, NE) Attorney General Jon Bruning and State Senator Annette Dubas (District 34) reminded landowners today to use caution when approached by wind energy developers. These developers are seeking to enter into agreements with Nebraska farmers, ranchers and other landowners for the wind rights on their land, including Custer, Holt, Cherry, Madison and Boone counties.

"As with any contract, once you sign on the dotted line, you're making a commitment that could affect you for a long time," Bruning said. "It's important to clearly understand the terms of the agreement and consult a legal or financial professional before signing anything over."

Bruning and Dubas noted that such agreements have a long-term impact not only on the value of land, but on landowners and future generations. Because the wind energy industry is only beginning to develop, the long-term financial impact may be difficult to gauge.

"This could be much like the historic rush for ownership over land, gold, oil and water. After the value of a natural resource reaches mainstream, the person who profits usually understands its worth," Dubas said. "Nebraska landowners must carefully consider the wind industry and its potential future for profitability in Nebraska. Nebraska is ranked sixth in the nation for the amount of wind potential it could produce on an annual basis. The industry is underdeveloped in Nebraska in comparison to surrounding states. Nebraskans should be very excited about the potential for a profitable future but should remain vigilant of the worth of this resource."

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Attorney General Jon Bruning

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 16, 2007 10:45am CDT

Contact: Holley Hatt
402.471.2067

Bruning Travels to Egypt, Israel and Jordan for Aspen-Rodel Fellowship in Public Leadership

(Lincoln, NE) Attorney General Jon Bruning will travel to Egypt, Israel and Jordan March 17-25 as part of the Aspen Institute-Rodel Fellowships in Public Leadership program.

“Leaders in the 21st Century must think globally,” Bruning said. “Developments in the Middle East can have an immediate and direct impact on Nebraskans. When we understand and respect this relationship, we open the path for responsible decision making.”

Bruning is one of 24 young political leaders across the nation selected for the inaugural class of the Aspen-Rodel fellowship program. Missouri Secretary of State Robin Carnahan, New Jersey State Senator Tom Kean, Jr., and Chairman of GOPAC Michael Steele are among the participants.

As an Aspen-Rodel fellow, Bruning is invited to attend three seminars focusing on citizenship, leadership and democracy and to participate in an extended trip to the Egypt, Israel and Jordan. The purpose of the trip is to interact with foreign leaders and understand how developments in the Middle East impact American policy.

The Aspen-Rodel Fellowship program was founded in 2005 to provide the nation’s top young political leaders with a better understanding of America’s underlying democratic principles and to help foster civility in the public arena. The two-year bipartisan program is sponsored by the Aspen Institute, an international nonprofit leadership organization, and the Rodel Foundation, a group of public and private organizations committed to improving education.

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Attorney General Jon Bruning

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 16, 2007 1:00pm CDT

Contact: Holley Hatt
402.471.2067

Bruning Announces Conviction in Fairbury Child Sexual Assault Case

(Lincoln, NE) Attorney General Jon Bruning today announced a jury convicted Roger Schmidt, Sr., 63, of Fairbury, Neb., of one count of first degree sexual assault of a child and four counts of sexual assault of a child in Jefferson County District Court late Wednesday.

"In most of these cases, the children are victimized by a relative or acquaintance. Sadly, this case is no different," Bruning said. "We'll do everything we can to put Mr. Schmidt behind bars and keep him from hurting another child."

A 2000 U.S. Department of Justice study found 34.2 percent of sexual assault victims under 18 are assaulted by family members; 58.7 percent are victimized by acquaintances.

A Fairbury Police Department investigation found between 2001 and 2006 Schmidt committed sexual acts with three young girls in his home. Two of the victims were Schmidt's neighbors. The third victim lived with his son. The girls are currently ages 5, 9 and 10.

First degree sexual assault of a child is a class II felony, punishable by 1-50 years in prison. Sexual assault of a child is a class IIIA felony, punishable by up to five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine.

Schmidt is currently being held in Jefferson County Jail until his sentencing hearing in Jefferson County District Court on May 18. Jefferson County Attorney Linda Bauer and Assistant Attorney General John Freudenberg are handling the case.

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An audio clip about the conviction is posted on the Attorney General's Web site at www.ago.state.ne.us.



Attorney General Jon Bruning

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 16, 2007 5:00pm CDT

Contact: Holley Hatt
402.471.2067

Bruning Secures Conviction in Long Pine Shooting

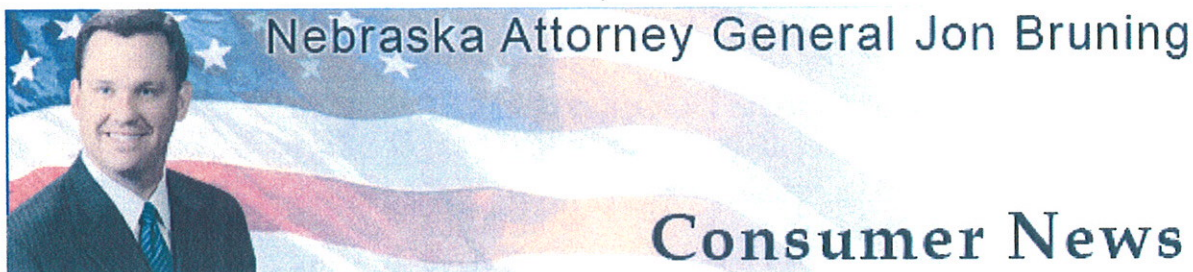
(Lincoln, Neb.) Attorney General Jon Bruning today announced a jury found Jackson Roark, 75, of Long Pine guilty of two counts of terroristic threats. Roark fired gun shots toward a number of people, including children, floating in inner tubes on the Long Pine Creek in September 2003.

“Mr. Roark engaged in reckless and criminal behavior by firing shots at a family to scare them off a public creek,” Bruning said. “Nebraskans should be able to inner tube down a creek without fearing for their lives.”

Making terroristic threats is a Class IV felony punishable by up to five years in prison and/or \$10,000 in fines. Under Nebraska law, Roark will no longer be able to possess a firearm because he is a convicted felon.

A sentencing hearing is scheduled for May 11 in Brown County District Court. Assistant Attorney General Corey O’Brien is handling the case.

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March 7, 2007

Don't Be Fooled By E-mail Scams Promising Tax Refunds

It's tax season. Of course, we're all hoping for a refund, but don't let the lure of a little extra cash in your wallet hook you into a phishing scam. In a phishing scam, thieves pose as legitimate organizations to steal a person's identifying information through e-mail solicitations.

This year, we've seen an increase in the number of tax refund scams. Thieves are posing as the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and sending e-mails to consumers. The e-mails notify consumers that they are eligible to receive a tax refund for a specific amount and ask them to fill out an online form to receive their money.

Although the form looks like an authentic IRS form, it is not. *The IRS does not communicate with taxpayers or request personal information via e-mail.* Consumers end up turning over their personal information to thieves. Instead of receiving a refund, they lose their identities and their money.

Here are some tips to avoid becoming a victim of a phishing scheme:

- Treat unsolicited e-mail requests for financial information or other personal data as suspicious.
- Do not respond to an unsolicited e-mail or click on a link within the e-mail. The link may be corrupted and send you to a bogus Web site. Instead, delete it.
- Contact the actual government agency or business to find out if the e-mail is genuine. Call the IRS at (800) 829-1040 to check the validity of an e-mail you receive.
- Check your monthly credit card and bank statements for suspicious transactions.
- Check your credit report every year for free at www.annualcreditreport.com.

For more information about tax refund or phishing schemes, contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division, toll free at (800) 727-6432 or

visit our Web site at www.ago.ne.gov.

Best wishes,

Jon

Jon Bruning
Attorney General of Nebraska

For more information, contact:
Consumer Protection Division
Nebraska Attorney General's Office
Toll Free: 1.800.727.6432
Email: nedoj@ago.ne.gov

En Espanol:
1.888.850.7555
Llamada gratuita en Nebraska
Senior Outreach Hotline:
1.888.287.0778
Web site: www.ago.ne.gov

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Attorney General Jon Bruning

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 7, 2007 10:00am CST

Contact: Holley Hatt
402.471.2067

Bruning Files Charges Against Former Ravenna Police Officer for Child Sexual Assault

(Lincoln, NE) Attorney General Jon Bruning today charged former Ravenna police officer Larry Williams, 50, with first degree sexual assault of a child in Buffalo County Court.

“Putting Mr. Williams behind bars won't change the past for this young woman,” Bruning said, “but, we'll do everything in our power to bring him to justice so he can't exploit another child.”

Nebraska State Patrol and Attorney General's Office investigations determined Williams was sexually involved with a young teenage girl between 2001 and 2004, starting when the girl was just 14.

Williams resigned from the Ravenna Police Department in January 2005, after nine years with the department.

First degree sexual assault of a child is a class II felony, punishable by one to 50 years in prison.

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Attorney General Jon Bruning
Guest Column: March 5, 2007
Contact: Holley Hatt, 402-471-2067

Beware of Tax Refund E-mail Scams

It's tax season. Of course, we're all hoping for a refund, but don't let the lure of a little extra cash in your wallet hook you into a phishing scam. In a phishing scam, thieves pose as legitimate organizations to steal a person's identifying information through an e-mail solicitation.

This year, we've seen an increase in the number of tax refund scams. Thieves are posing as the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and sending e-mails to consumers. The e-mails notify consumers that they are eligible to receive a tax refund for a specific amount and ask them to fill out an online form to receive their money.

Although the form looks like an authentic IRS form, it is not. The IRS does not communicate with taxpayers or request personal information via e-mail. Consumers end up turning over their personal information to thieves. Instead of receiving a refund, they lose their identities and their money.

Here are some tips to avoid becoming a victim of a phishing scheme:

- Treat unsolicited e-mail requests for financial information or other personal data as suspicious.
- Do not respond to an unsolicited e-mail or click on a link within the e-mail. The link may be corrupted and send you to a bogus Web site. Instead, delete it.
- Contact the actual government agency or business to find out if the e-mail is genuine. Call the IRS at (800) 829-1040 to check the validity of an e-mail you receive.
- Check your monthly credit card and bank statements for suspicious transactions.
- Check your credit report every year for free at www.annualcreditreport.com.

For more information about tax refund or phishing schemes, contact the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division, toll free at (800) 727-6432 or by visiting our Web site at www.ago.ne.gov.



Attorney General Jon Bruning

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 2, 2007 2:30pm CST

Contact: Holley Hatt
402.471.2067

Bruning Files Complaint to Revoke Former Trooper's Law Enforcement Certification

(Lincoln, NE) Attorney General Jon Bruning today filed a formal complaint with the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice to revoke the Law Enforcement Officer Certification for former Nebraska state trooper Robert Henderson of Omaha. Henderson had joined the Knights Party, an organization with known ties to the Ku Klux Klan (KKK).

"We can't allow members of the KKK to carry a gun and a badge," Bruning said. "Nebraskans need to trust that officers enforce the law without prejudice."

After receiving a tip, a Nebraska State Patrol investigation determined that Henderson had joined the Knights Party and posted several messages on the group's Web site. Henderson's employment was terminated March 15, 2006.

On Aug. 25, 2006, Bruning filed a lawsuit challenging an arbitrator's decision requiring that Henderson be reinstated as a state trooper. A collective bargaining agreement requires that an arbitrator decide a case when an agreement regarding future employment cannot be reached after appeal.

On Dec. 13, 2006, a Lancaster County District Court judge vacated the arbitrator's ruling, finding that Henderson should not be reinstated.

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The complaint and an audio clip are posted on the Attorney General's Web site at www.ago.state.ne.us.